Settlers to be Given Low Rates on Water Rights

COSTS of canal maintenance and water rights cannot be determined until the project is somewhat further advanced. However, it is estimated at this time, the portion of the costs chargeable to the land reclamation, to be distributed over 40 years, will amount to between $85.00 and $100.00 an acre. The charge would be without interest. It is estimated the cost of operation and maintenance will be $2.60 per acre, including the power pumping cost.

Under this plan, the total indicated payments by the settler would be $2.60 an acre per year for operation and maintenance, and no fee for construction for a period of four years. After that time, he would pay on the basis of $4.60 per acre each year for operation, maintenance, and construction during the succeeding four years, and thereafter, for 32 years, the charges would amount to approximately $5.10 an acre. How closely these charges will hold to the present plan cannot be said at this time. The government is stressing the need for placing the cost of settling the reclaimed land at a minimum and so it is believed every effort will be made to conform to the original charges as far as possible. During the 36 years of its existence, the Bureau of Reclamation, which is responsible for the construction of the Columbia Basin project, has built 138 dams and reservoirs to regulate streams and conserve water, now irrigating in excess of 2,800,000 acres of once dry and useless land. Through this endeavor has been created more than $1,000,000,000 worth of taxable property. Homes for more than 900,000 people have been made on these watered deserts.

F. A. Banks Heads Staff

No small charge has been placed in the hands of this bureau of the United States government. Each phase of the engineering which has made possible the development of the Grand Coulee Dam and irrigation program has been made possible by the bureau, interpreted and personally directed by Frank A. Banks, Supervising Engineer, in charge of the project. Through his hands has passed the minute details which have gone into the construction work, and night and day his counsel has been sought to solve the many and, oftentimes, nearly heart-breaking problems arising in the general course of events. His charge has been the construction and supervision of man's greatest undertaking.

The Mason-Walsh-Atkinson-Kier Company was given the contract for the base work on the dam. That organization took over the work in 1934, after more than 2,000,000 cubic yards of overburden had been removed from the dam site. Early in 1938 the M-W-A-K Company completed its contract, then the next phase of the construction was ready for consideration.